

The Arts Council

of Greater New Haven

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Appropriations Committee Hearing Re: Governor's Deficit Mitigation Plan March 11, 2010

Governor Rell's latest mitigation plan has proposed additional cuts to the Commission on Culture and Tourism, an agency that has already been dealt cuts of 38% in the current fiscal year. The plan calls for reducing Culture & Tourism and Arts and Basic Cultural Resources Grants by 25%. These are grants which have already been approved. Among the programs affected are grants to schools, the innovative Hot Schools program and marketing grants, the ONLY tourism funding this agency has to provide organizations assistance to market their programs to out of state visitors (after previous cuts left the Statewide Marketing budget with just \$1 dollar).

The plan also calls for cutting Line Item Grants an additional 35%. The arts and cultural organizations who received these grants for operating support, were contracted last fall, with funding allocated in three payments, the These organizations incorporated this promised amount into their operating budgets. It is unfair and irresponsible to pull this money now, as many of these organizations have fiscal years ending June 30th. It would be impossible to adjust to cuts of this magnitude at this late date.

The arts should be part of the recovery solution:

The arts contribute to economic competitiveness through the generation of jobs, tax revenue and consumer spending. The Commission on Culture and Tourism's 2006 Economic Impact study, found the "impact of culture and tourism in Connecticut is profound and far-reaching," accounting for \$14 billion in economic activity annually.

Businesses, in order to thrive in a knowledge economy, require the imagination, problem-solving and communications skills that arts education cultivates.

City planners, property developers and economists are increasingly recognizing the arts as an effective anchor for development and revitalization. Cultural anchors such as the Shubert Theater and in New Haven and the Palace Theater in New Haven have been instrumental in revitalizing our urban centers. Arts activities from outdoor festivals and public art to museums, concerts, and plays are key to creating vital places where people want to congregate. These same assets attract visitors to our state.

A thriving arts sector creates a high quality of life, which is beneficial in attracting and retaining businesses. For Connecticut to keep young workers, we need creative communities.

The arts are an investment in Connecticut's future. To reduce funding for the Connecticut Commission on Culture and Tourism even further is shortsighted.

Cynthia Clair
Executive Director